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U.S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce

Substitutes for tin cans

Washington

1917

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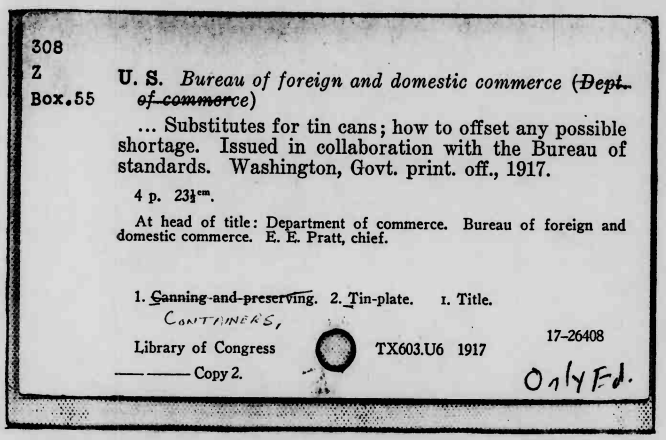

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U. S. *Bureau of foreign and domestic commerce* (~~Dept. of commerce~~)

... Substitutes for tin cans; how to offset any possible shortage. Issued in collaboration with the Bureau of standards. Washington, Govt. print. off., 1917.

4 p. 23½cm.

At head of title: Department of commerce. Bureau of foreign and domestic commerce. E. E. Pratt, chief.

1. ~~Canning-and-preserving~~. CONTAINERS, 2. Tin-plate. I. Title.

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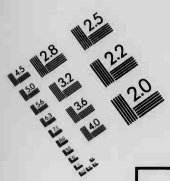
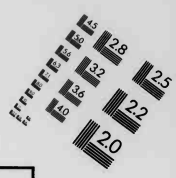
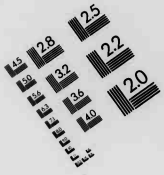
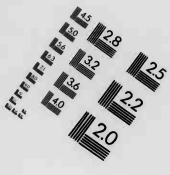

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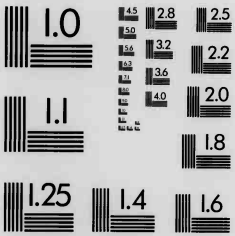

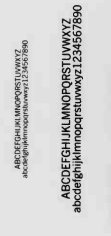

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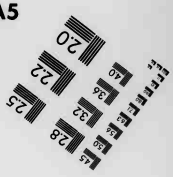
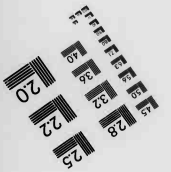
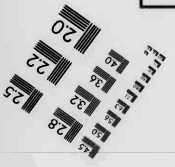
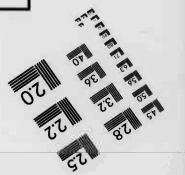

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE
E. E. PRATT, Chief

SUBSTITUTES FOR TIN CANS

HOW TO OFFSET ANY POSSIBLE SHORTAGE

Issued in Collaboration with the Bureau of Standards

WASHINGTON
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE
1917

SUBSTITUTES FOR TIN CANS.

HOW TO OFFSET ANY POSSIBLE SHORTAGE.

The Department of Commerce in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture has long been earnestly striving to increase the output of tin cans for food containers. To this end it has endeavored to increase the supply of tin, to secure the continuous movement of the materials entering into tin cans from the place of production to the place of use, and to facilitate the supply and movement of machinery for producing cans. The Department desires in every practicable way to promote the present and permanent prosperity of the tin-can industry. There is no possible doubt of the steady and growing demand for its products.

Tin plate is 98 per cent steel and 2 per cent tin. Steel is the backbone of war, and the mills have not been able to keep all their customers fully supplied at all times. Moreover, abnormal freight demands have made prompt deliveries uncertain. There have also been decreased imports of pig tin, due to decreased production and reduced shipping facilities. It is not surprising, therefore, that the tin-plate makers can not provide the can manufacturers with sufficient plate to enable them to meet the increase in the demand for cans, which is 25 to 40 per cent greater than it was last year.

It is therefore imperative that the available supply of cans be utilized, in so far as possible, for packing products that can be preserved only in tin, and that substitutes be used for other products wherever practicable. Such containers should be cheaper than tin, so that the ultimate benefit from lower costs may offset the initial expense of the substitution.

COST AND DESCRIPTION OF FIBER CONTAINERS.

The price of glass has steadily risen and has reached a point at which any large extension of its use for food containers is impracticable. At present fiber or paper containers of good quality are being produced in considerable and increasing quantities, and for many purposes are supplanting glass and tin plate. The price of the fiber containers depends upon the size, the quality of the paper-pulp material, the number of treatments with paraffin, and the amount of printed matter on the outside. The commoner types

may be obtained at 1.25 to 1.5 cents for the half-pint size, 1.25 to 1.6 cents for the pint size, and 1.5 to 1.65 cents for the quart size.

Fiber containers are made in various shapes and sizes adapted to different purposes and may or may not be coated with paraffin, which is chemically inert and is sometimes baked into the paper material. Some of these containers are claimed to be air-tight, proof against leakage, and protected from contamination by the paraffin. Some containers appear to be more nearly air-tight than others of the same style, probably because of better fittting covers. These containers are light in weight, pack readily for shipment, are easily opened, and are used but once.

FIBER CONTAINERS FOR DELIVERING FOODS TO CONSUMER.

The demand for "ready-to-eat" foods, such as baked pork and beans, spaghetti, etc., with the simple direction "Heat and serve," represents the largest factor in the increased use of tin cans. These foods must be processed in the containers at or above the temperature of boiling water, and no substitute for tin has been found that satisfactorily meets these conditions. However, a great economy in tin can be effected by home cooking of such products during the present shortage.

Fiber containers are recommended for the distribution by the retailer of many foodstuffs, including milk, cream, buttermilk, ice cream, oysters, sirups, marshmallow creams, dried fruits, preserves, jellies, mincemeat, horseradish, relishes, pickles, deviled ham and chicken, vinegar, dry and prepared mustard, soda water, salads, sauerkraut, and olives.

FIBER CONTAINERS FOR PACKING AND THE WHOLESALE TRADE.

It is claimed that dry food products such as coffee, tea, alum, baking powder, spices, raisins, and prunes may be successfully packed by producers and manufacturers in paper or fiber containers. For some of those products, bags lined with tinfoil have been in successful use for 10 years or more and they form an attractive package that is said to be moisture proof.

Other commodities usually packed in tin could be marketed as well in paper or fiber, with the advantage of lower cost. Among these tobacco occupies a conspicuous position, and other articles are lye, cleansers, soap powders, shoe polishes, metal polishes, soaps and shaving preparations, toilet articles, such as talcum powder, and various dry drugs and chemicals. Paper containers are also suggested for preserved fruits and jellies made at home. Cloth sacks for tobacco and wood for sirups and molasses are also recommended where retail sales can be made in bulk.

For packers of dry products who are opposed to the adoption of fiber containers because of the good will built up upon the style and shape of a tin container, fiber containers having a tin top and bottom are available. These containers, when labeled, have the appearance of all-tin cans, and are almost as serviceable.

Purchasers of large quantities of foodstuffs, such as hotels, restaurants, and boarding houses, can also contribute directly to the tin-saving campaign by buying supplies in large cans instead of small ones. In addition to aiding in tin conservation, they will thus get the supplies at a lower rate.

TESTS OF SUBSTITUTE CONTAINERS—TRADE LISTS.

Certain types of these containers are now being tested to determine to what extent the claims of their manufacturers as to their general qualities can be substantiated. Manufacturers of substitute containers who wish their products tested should send samples to the Bureau of Standards, Department of Commerce, with full information regarding commodities for which the containers are specially designed, prices, and ability to contract for early deliveries. Names and addresses of firms prepared to supply fiber and other containers may be obtained from the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce or its district or cooperative offices. Cooperation is required between the Government departments, the manufacturers of tin plate and of substitute containers, the packers of foodstuffs and of other articles commonly put up in tin, and the general public, if the available supply of tin plate is to be limited to strictly necessary uses and if, at the same time, the largest possible quantity of food is to be preserved against the special needs of the coming months.

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